





























Sweeter Still Than This









SWEEPER  
BETTER  
THAN  
THIS

ABRAHAM LINCOLN SOCIETY

WILLIAM W. WILSON

THE SWEEPERS

THE SWEEPERS

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1874

TO MY HUSBAND





**B**

UT sweeter still than this, than these,  
than all,  
Is first and passionate love,—it  
stands alone;  
Like Adam's recollection of his fall,  
And life yields nothing further to recall."

—BYRON.



## CONTENTS

---

	PAGE
A WOMAN'S TRIBUTE . . . . .	21
PROMISE OF SPRING . . . . .	31
LOVE, THE GIFT . . . . .	39
WHAT THE VIOLIN SAID . . . . .	51
A VALENTINE . . . . .	57
SPRING SONG . . . . .	65
TWILIGHT . . . . .	73





## CONTENTS

(Continued)

	PAGE
BECAUSE . . . . .	81
SANCTUARY . . . . .	89
THE COMING OF LOVE . . . . .	99
CREDO . . . . .	105
DREAMS . . . . .	117
BUD AND BLOOM . . . . .	125





## ILLUSTRATIONS

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	PAGE
I. MY HEART, IT IS A VIOLIN <i>Frontispiece</i>	✓
II. IF I COULD TOUCH THE IVORY KEYS WITH FINGERS THAT SWAYED THE SOULS OF MEN . . .	25 ✓
III. HER HEART OF LOVE DOTH KNOW . . . . .	33 ✓
IV. THOUGH FLAMES BURN OUT INTO ASHES, AND THE PAST IS A VAGUE REGRET . . . . .	41 ✓
V. A MYSTIC HOPE TO SHARE . . .	47 ✓
VI. WITH LIVING STRING AND BOW OF FLAME . . . . .	53
VII. SUNSET AND SENSE OF REST, AND THE NIGHT'S LONG DREAMS OF THEE . . . . .	59 ✓

## ILLUSTRATIONS


(Continued)

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	PAGE
VIII. A PURPLE PLUME LEAPS INTO LIFE ON THE LILAC TREE . . . . .	67 ✓
IX. THE SCARLET MAPLE, GLOWING LIKE PENT FLAME . . . . .	75 ✓
X. AND LIGHT THE SPRINGTIME'S AIRY TREAD . . . . .	83 ✓
XI. MY HEART IS THY DEAR TEMPLE	91 ✓
XII. BETWEEN THEIR SILKEN FOLDS I SET A LIGHT . . . . .	101
XIII. THE SWORD WHICH GUARDS THAT PARADISE BRANDISHETH STILL ITS BLADE OF FLAME .	107 ✓
XIV. FRAIL AS BUTTERFLIES, POISED FOR AIRY FLIGHT . . . . .	119
XV. THE NIGHT IS A CLOSE-SHUT BUD	127



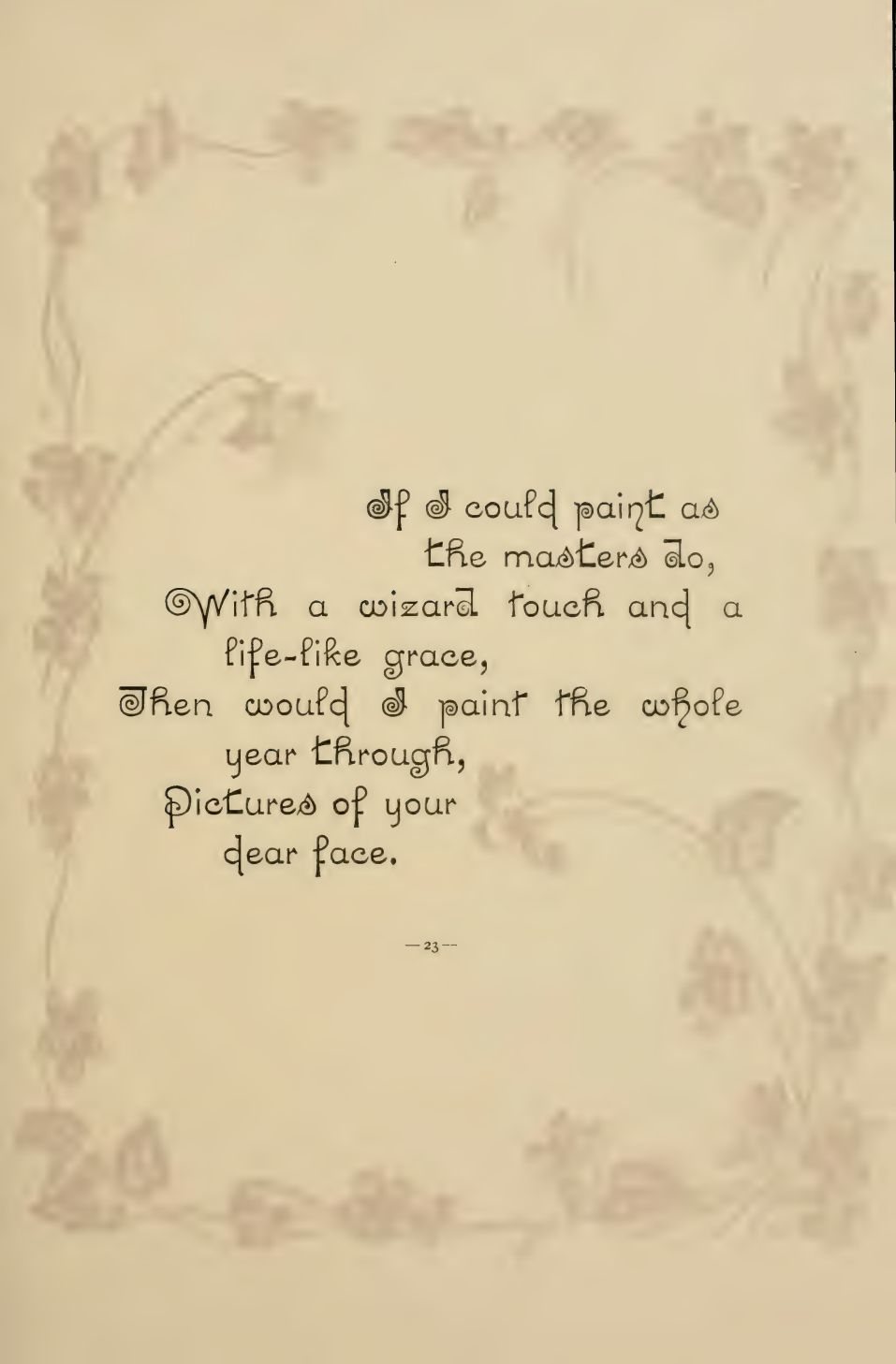




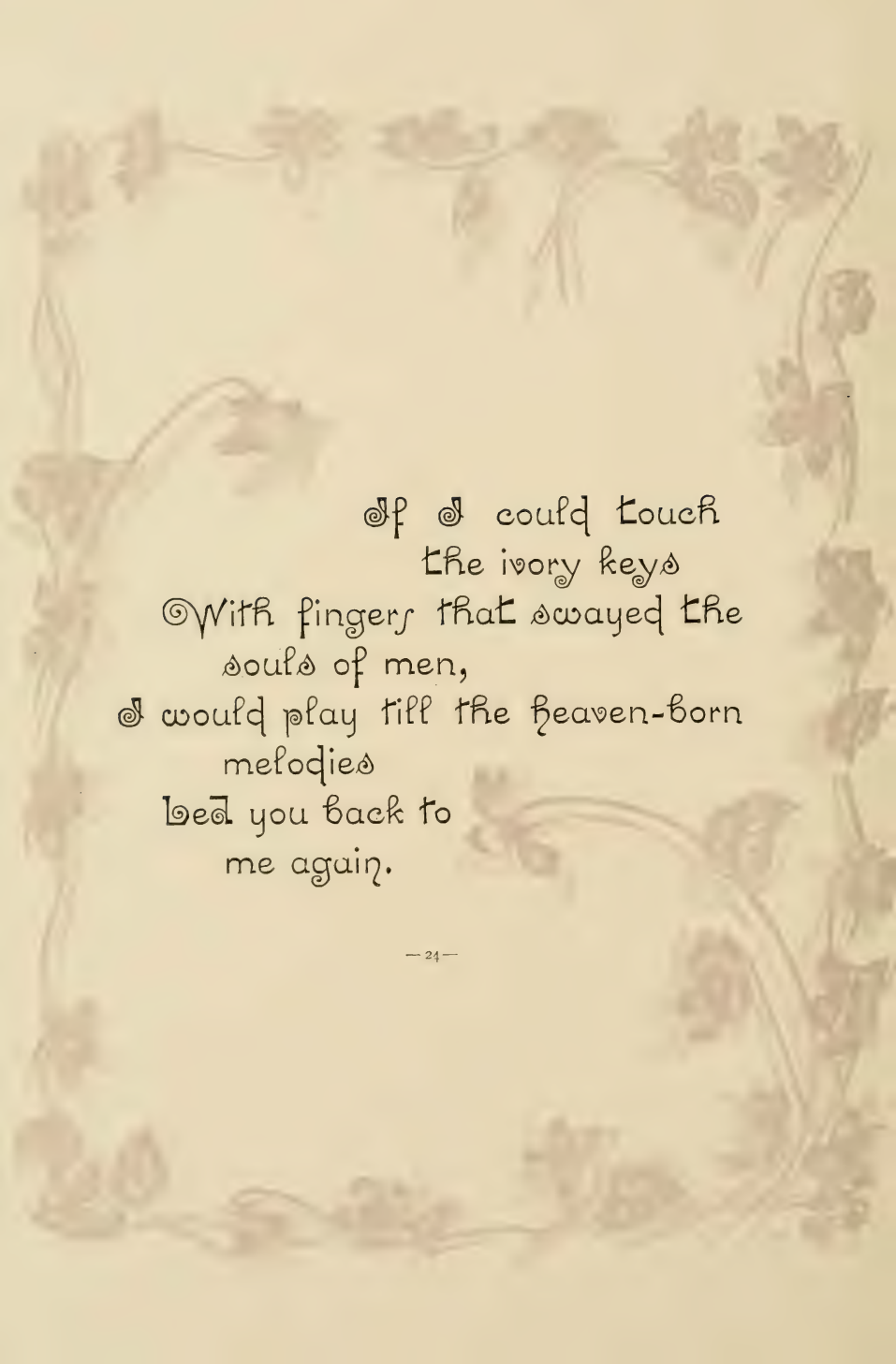
A Woman's Tribute

If God had given  
me the gift of  
a voice

That could charm with the  
notes of a Lorelie,  
I would sing and sing, till your  
own dear  
choice,  
Drew me to  
you alway.



If I could paint as  
the masters do,  
With a wizard touch and a  
life-like grace,  
Then would I paint the whole  
year through,  
Pictures of your  
dear face.

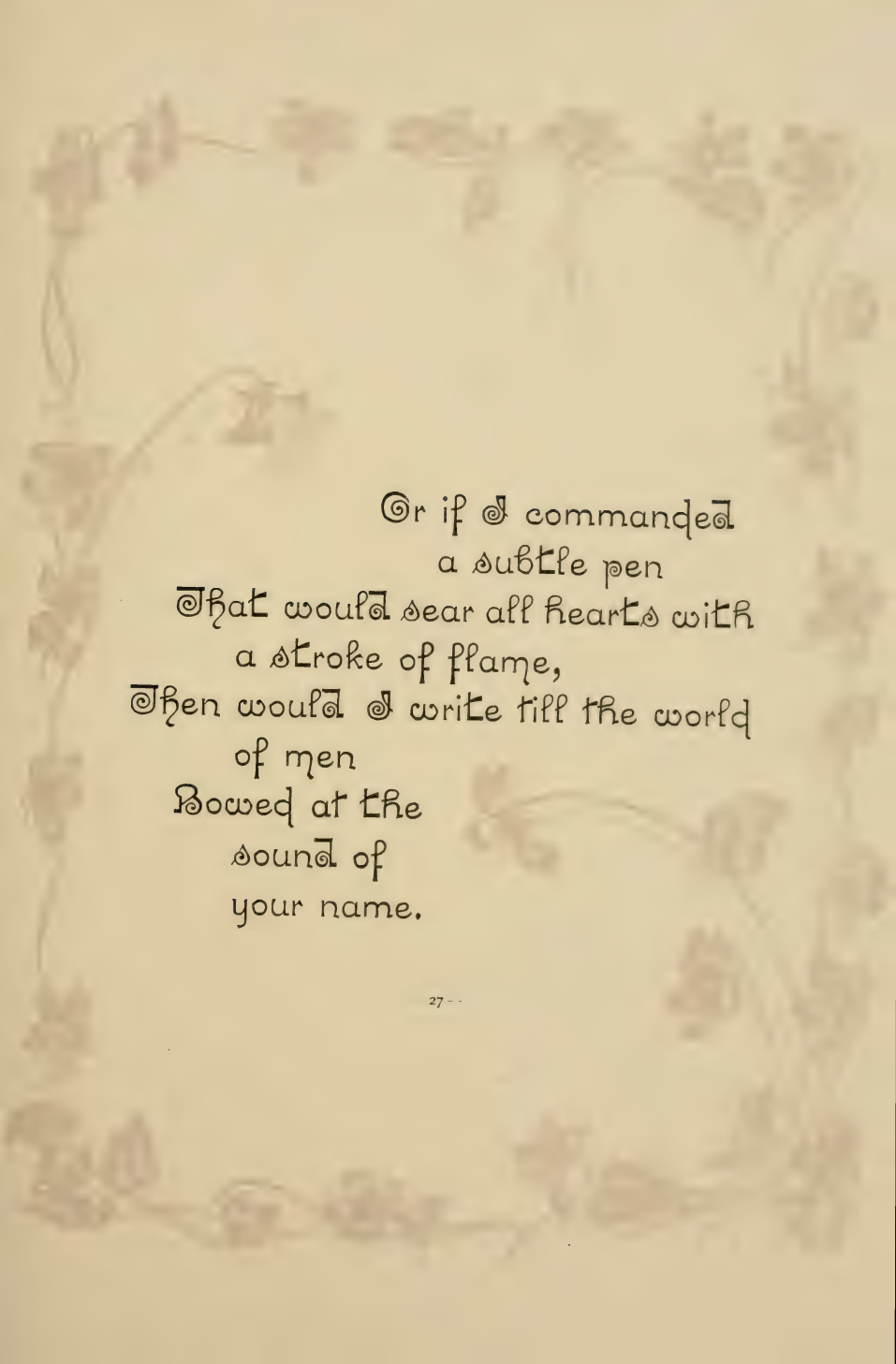


If I could touch  
The ivory keys  
With fingers that swayed the  
souls of men,  
I would play till the heaven-born  
melodies  
Led you back to  
me again.

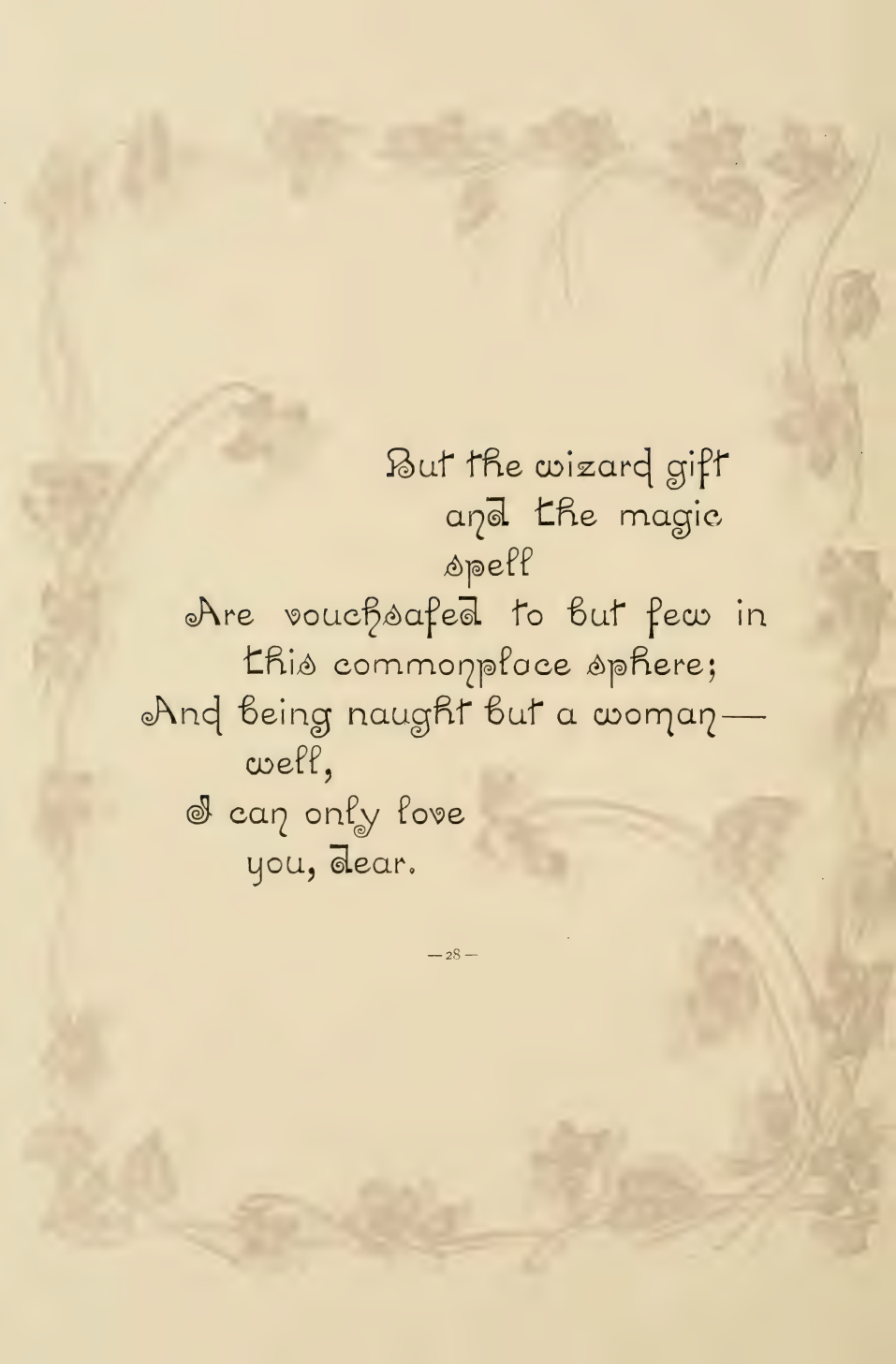









Or if I commanded  
a subtle pen  
That would sear all hearts with  
a stroke of flame,  
Then would I write till the world  
of men  
Bowed at the  
sound of  
your name.




But the wizard gift  
and the magic  
spell  
Are vouchsafed to but few in  
this commonplace sphere;  
And being naught but a woman—  
well,  
I can only love  
you, dear.

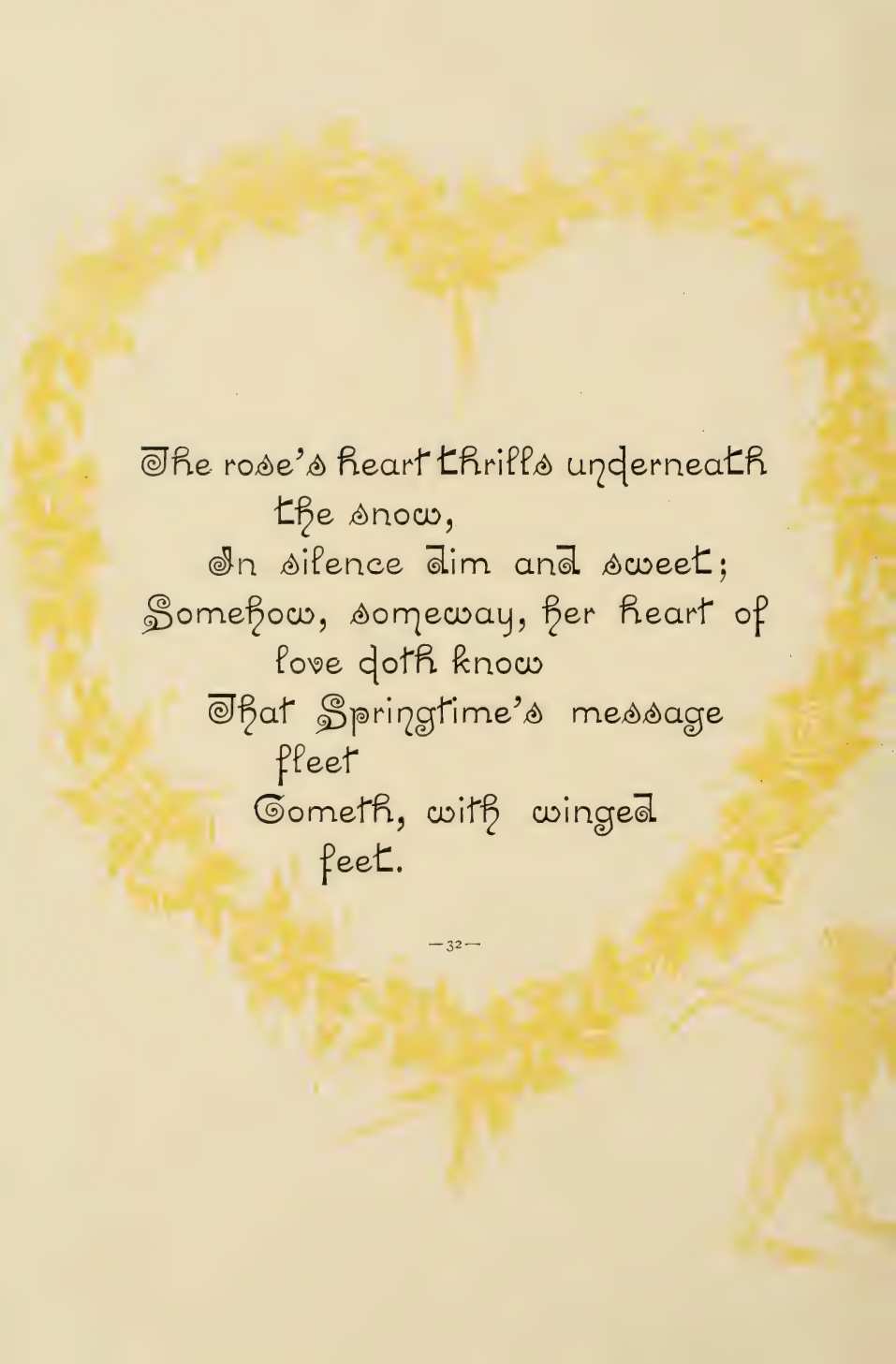






Promise of Spring






The rose's heart thrills underneath  
The snow,  
In silence dim and sweet;  
Somehow, somehow, her heart of  
love doth know  
That Springtime's message  
fleet  
Cometh, with winged  
feet.







In some beyond the sun-kissed  
Hills of June  
With verdure clad arise;  
The purling note of brooks, the  
wild bird's tune,  
Hushed, mystic, moonlit  
skies,  
Trail moths and fireflies.




Heart of my heart, the wintry days  
are long,  
Stern the decrees of fate;  
But somewhere, dear, abides the  
robin's song;  
We can afford to wait,  
Though Springtime cometh  
late.








A faint, stylized illustration of a flowering branch, possibly a cherry blossom, rendered in a light orange or peach color. The branch curves across the upper half of the page, with several blossoms and buds visible. The overall style is soft and artistic, typical of early 20th-century book design.


Love, The Gift




There is always one heart that  
remembers,  
Though the other heart forget;  
Though flames burn out into ashes,  
And the past is a vague regret.








Love is no passing fancy,  
To fade in a month or a year,  
Born of a poet's dreaming,  
And an ardent atmosphere.




Though the vivid halo of romance  
Wreathes all with its tropic  
gleam,  
And he sees the one beloved  
Through the haze of his golden  
dream,



For the soul of high ideals  
Looks forth to the days to  
be;  
And the poet's passionate wor-  
ship  
Wears the mantle of tragedy.





But once unto such is given  
A mystic hope to share;  
And life, when the dream is  
ended,  
Is a road that leads nowhere.












What the Violin Said



My heart, it is a violin,  
With living string and bow of  
flame;  
Its pulsing notes are sweet and  
thin,  
They only speak your name,  
Your dear, dear name.






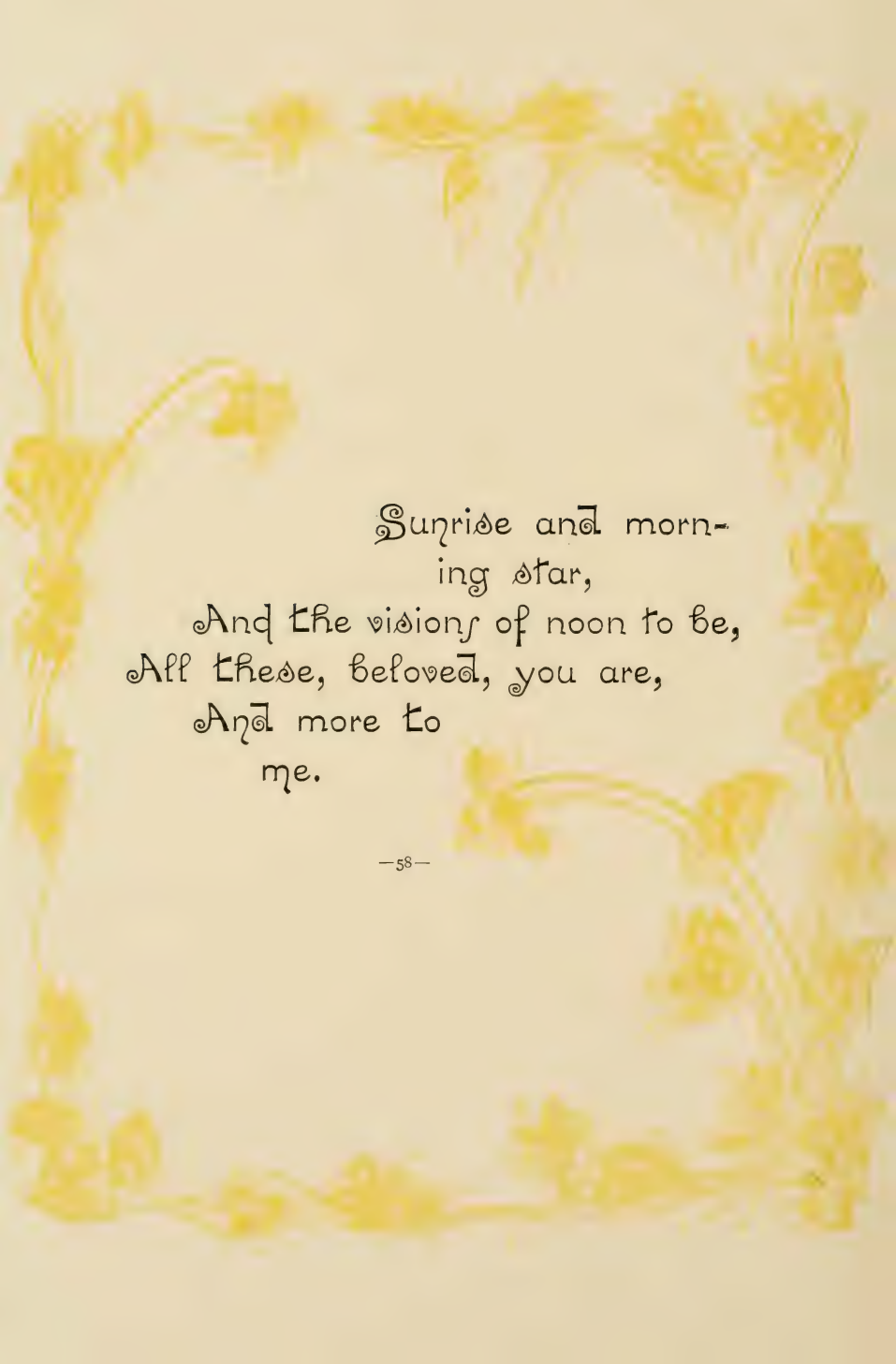


And should you seek the theme to  
change,  
Its fondest loyalty to prove,  
You'll find through all its widest  
range,  
It still shall whisper, "Love,"—  
Your name is love.





A Valentine

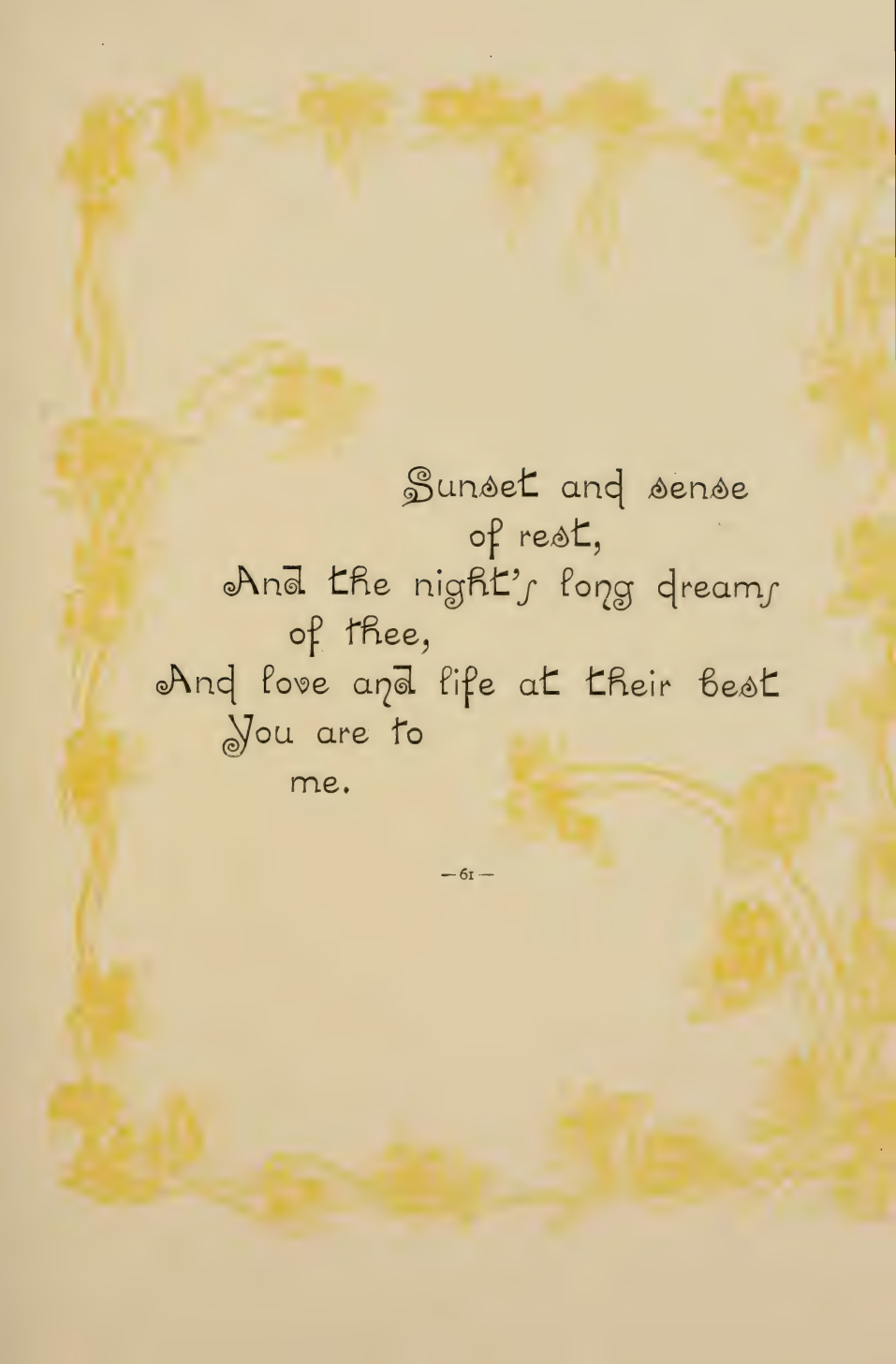


Sunrise and morn-  
ing star,  
And the visions of noon to be,  
All these, beloved, you are,  
And more to  
me.

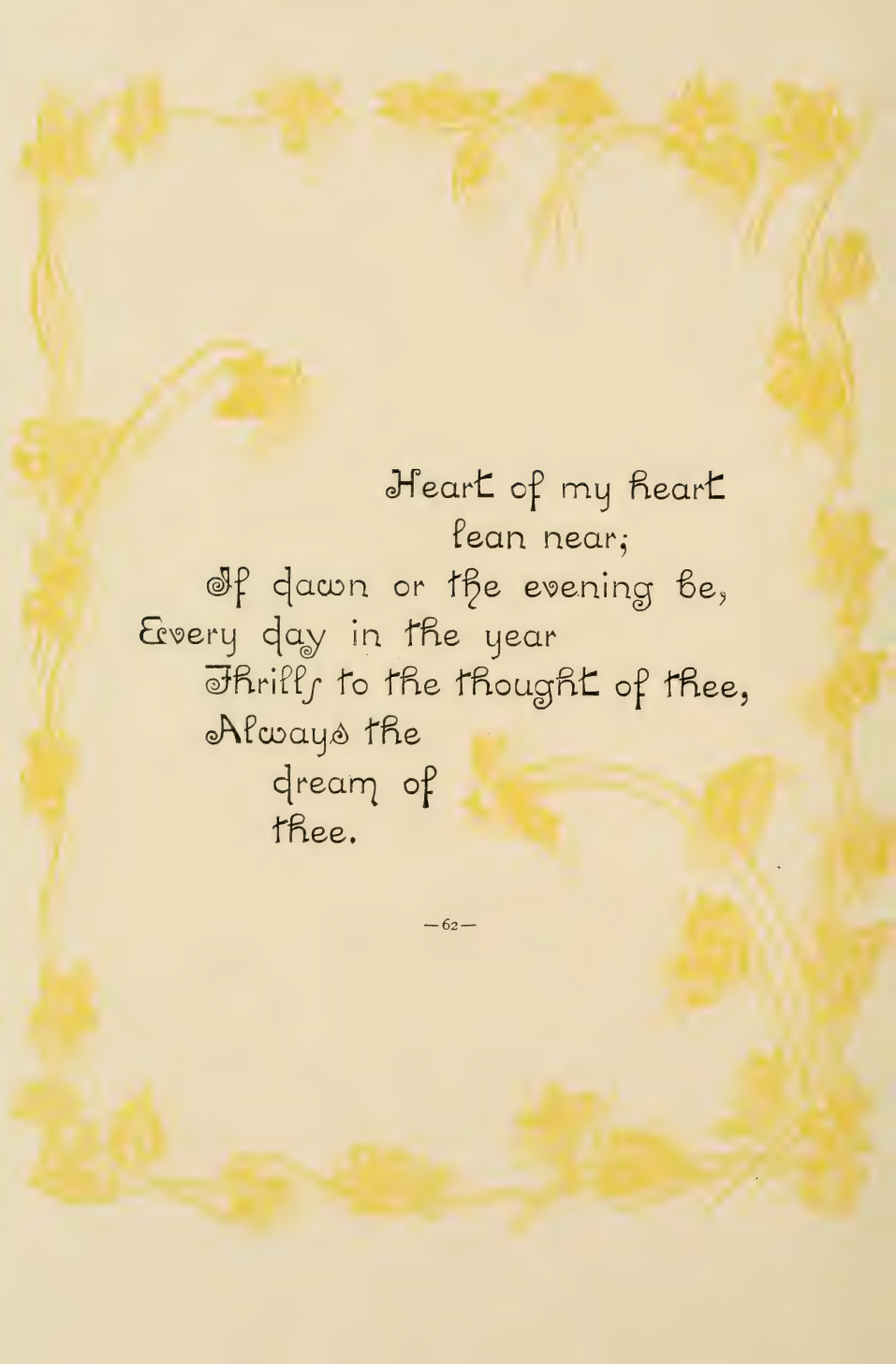









Sunset and sense  
of rest,  
And the night's long dreams  
of thee,  
And love and life at their best  
You are to  
me.



Heart of my heart  
lean near;  
Of dawn or the evening be,  
Every day in the year  
Thrills to the thought of thee,  
Always the  
dream of  
thee.







Spring Song

Love, let us seek the  
    primrose ways,  
The sad old world is  
    young again;  
Gone are the winter's  
    dreary days,  
With their dreams  
    of mist and rain,  
Their desolate dreams  
    of pain.







The air is sweet, and a  
purple plume  
leaps into life on the  
lilac tree,  
And the woods are full  
of a faint per-  
fume;  
The woods are a  
swaying sea  
Of emerald prophecy.

What are we waiting  
for, you and I?  
The past is dead, and  
the days that are  
here  
Thrill with an unknown  
ecstasy,  
And a heaven of love  
lies near,  
Ours for the taking,  
dear.

Heart of my heart, do you  
understand

That fate may be  
compassed by just  
one kiss?


That happiness lies in  
the clasp of your  
hand,

And heaven's ec-  
static bliss

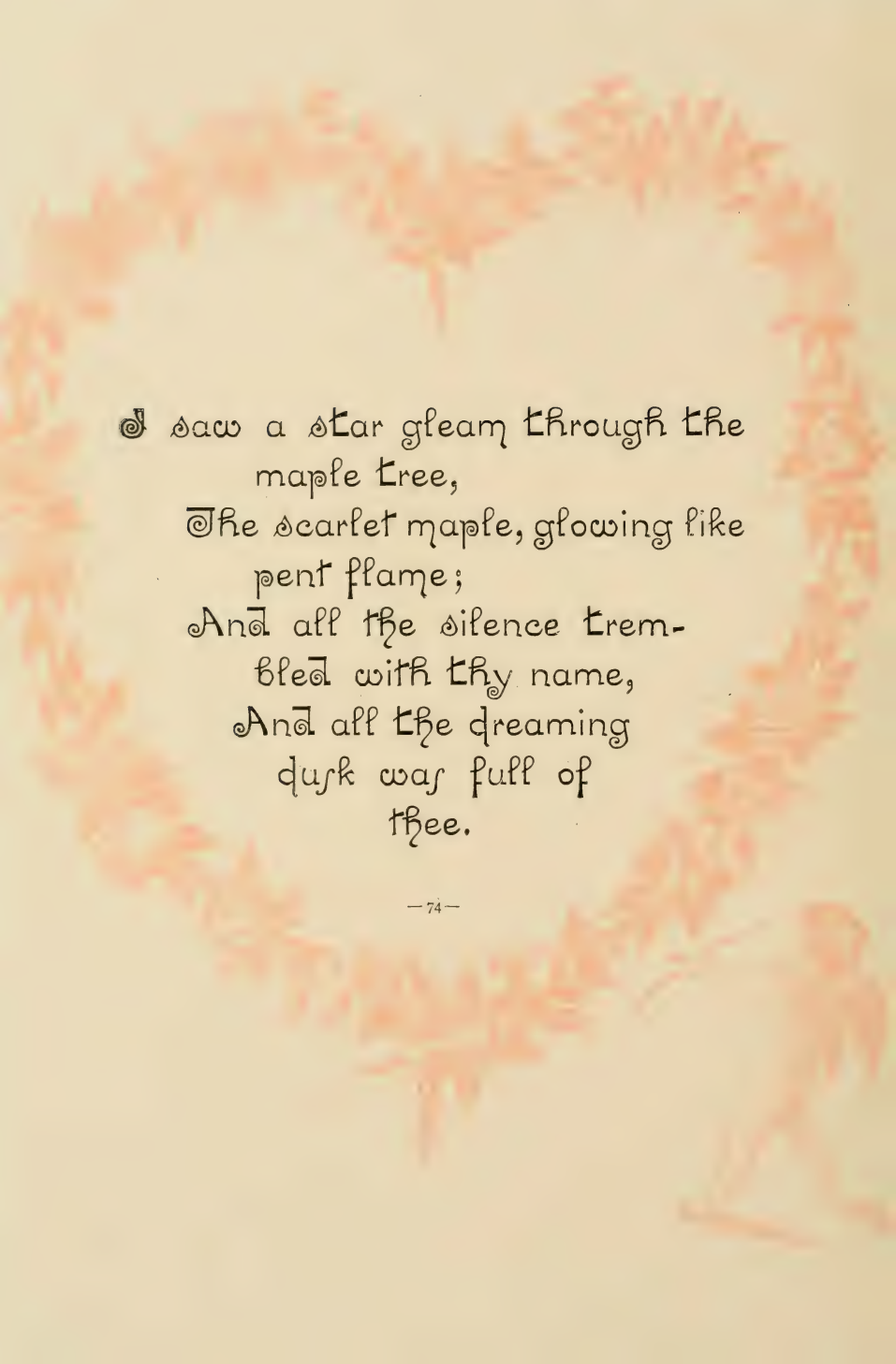
Is only and only  
this —

Your kiss, your pas-  
sionate kiss?





Twilight



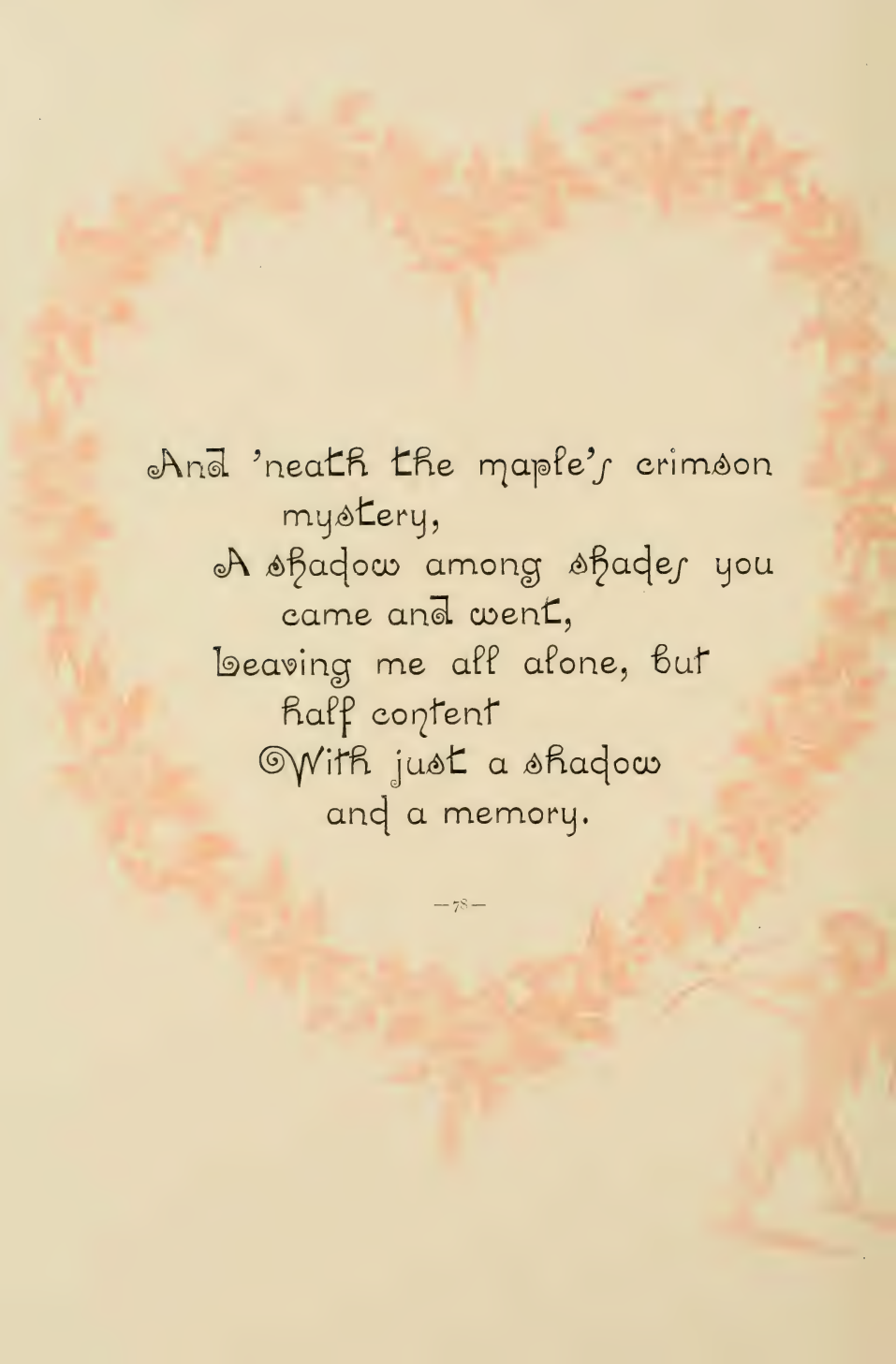
I saw a star gleam through the  
maple tree,  
The scarlet maple, glowing like  
pent flame;  
And all the silence trem-  
bled with thy name,  
And all the dreaming  
dusk was full of  
thee.








And then thou camest, beloved;  
thy footstep sprang  
Out of the stillness, with a  
rhythm divine,  
And echo ran to meet it,  
sweetheart mine,  
Eve turned to noonday,  
and the silence  
sang.



And 'neath the maple's crimson  
mystery,  
A shadow among shades you  
came and went,  
Leaving me all alone, but  
half content  
With just a shadow  
and a memory.







Because

Because you smile the  
    rose is red,  
The sunshine weaves its  
    golden thread,  
The dreamy heavens  
    are cloudless, blue,  
The air is soft because  
    of you,  
And light the Spring-  
    time's airy  
    thread.









What grief shall pine  
uncomforted,  
When smiles like yours  
are sweetly shed?  
The sad old world takes  
heart anew,  
Because you smile.

But when  
you frown  
what storms  
are bred,  
What thunder-clouds  
and lightnings  
dread!  
(No doubt that all I  
state is true  
From any poet's point  
of view.)  
Dear, 'Tis enough to turn  
one's head,  
Because you smile.







Sanctuary

My heart is thy dear tem-  
ple; come, my own,  
Into thy temple;—  
'tis the hour of  
prayer,  
And the white hopes  
and dreams that  
hover there,  
Murmur an orison that is  
thine alone.







Here the white altar with  
its lambent flame;  
Thine is the altar,  
mine the sacrifice;  
Whatever seemeth  
goodly in thine  
eyes,  
Lo! it is thine, wilt thou  
but speak its name.

How shall I give if thou  
wilt not demand?  
Since giving is all my  
life, I pray thee,  
ask;  
My life itself is thine;  
mine the dear task  
To lay its treasures open  
to thy hand.

I have set Duty higher  
than my heart,  
Renounced the crown  
of love for love's  
own sake;  
But from this hour 'tis  
thine, beloved, to  
take,  
A gift for thee, my con-  
queror, set apart.

My heart is thy fair temple;  
come, mine own,  
Dwell in thy sacred  
shrine for evermore.  
My king, my priest,  
my more than con-  
queror,  
Prove the sweet myster-  
ies that are thine  
alone.











The Coming of Love



I opened wide my curtains and  
each night,  
Between their silken folds I set  
a light,  
Fearing the love, dear love, might  
go astray,  
Missing the golden glory of the  
day:  
But in the darkness he hath found  
his way.








For when the night was dim, with-  
out a star,  
And all my oil burnt out, I heard  
afar  
A footfall echoing through the  
silent gloom;  
Then suddenly all the midnight  
was a bloom,  
And lo! your Presence in my empty  
room.





Creolo

That is not love  
which hesitates,  
Or coldly calculates the cost;  
For he must count the world  
well lost,  
Who steps within Love's mystic  
gates.








Passion is not an  
empty name,  
Wending as alien tongues  
advise;  
The sword which guards that  
Paradise  
Brandisheth still  
its blade  
of flame.

The comments of  
the critic throng,  
That self-appointed coterie,  
What shall they count in  
days to be,  
When life drifts  
on to even  
song?

For in that vague and  
sexless sphere,  
The shadowy Heaven the  
churches teach,  
What fruit of love shall ever  
reach  
The hearts that  
have been  
empty here?



The white stars pale  
and fade away,  
The horned moon grows slim  
and wan,  
Before the glory of the dawn,  
The larger radiance  
of the day.

So in the stress of  
that great  
light

Which never shone on sea or  
land,

The clasp of one beloved hand  
shall put a thou-  
sand doubts  
to flight.

Springtime evolves  
the violet

From pallid dawns when storm  
clouds lower;


So steadfastly I face the  
hour,

And bide the life  
that waits  
me yet.




The life whose future  
all shall prove  
Worthy of this most gracious  
creed;  
In days of grace, in hours of  
need,  
Here and Here-  
after, only—  
Love.





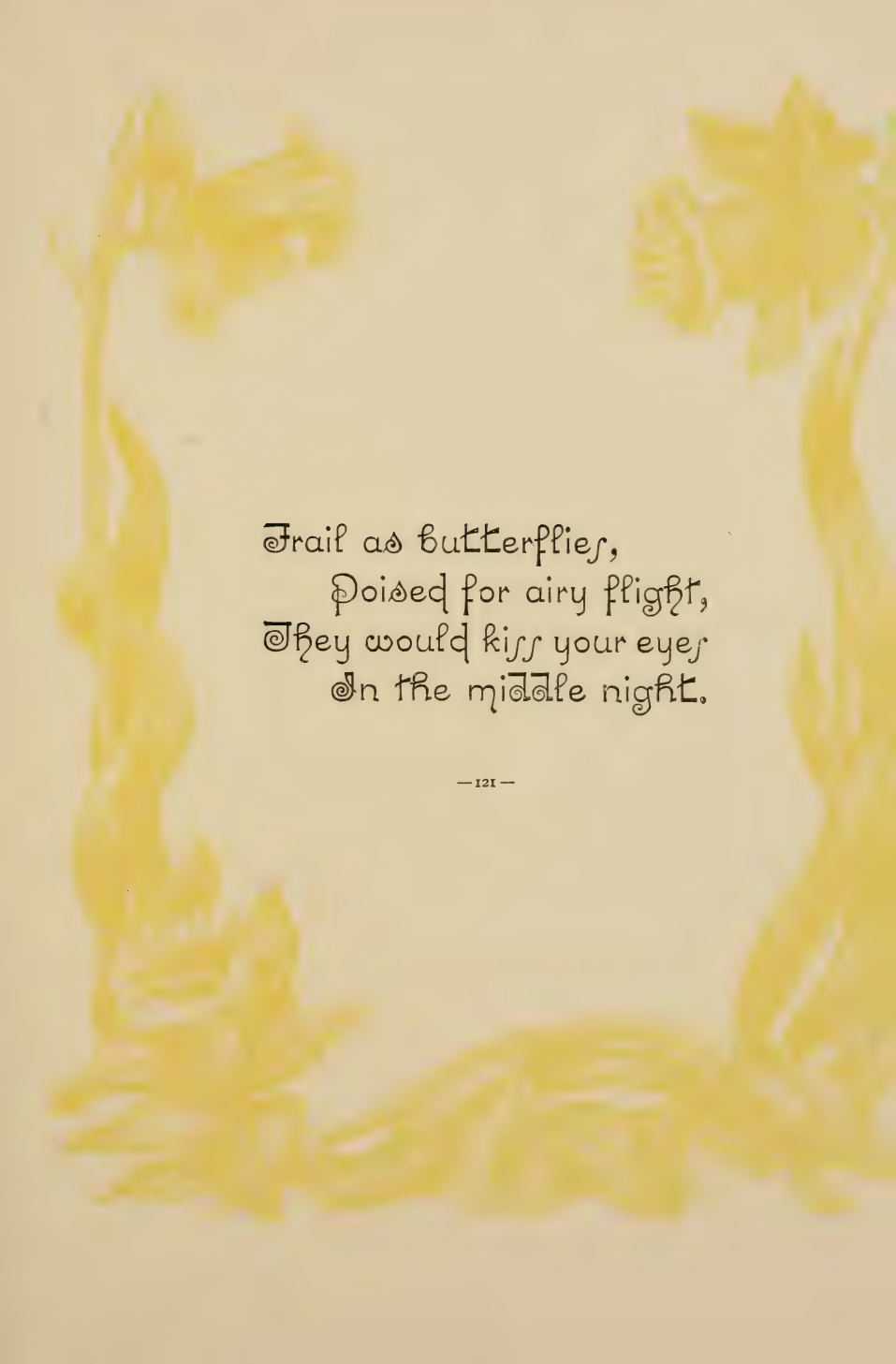
Dreams



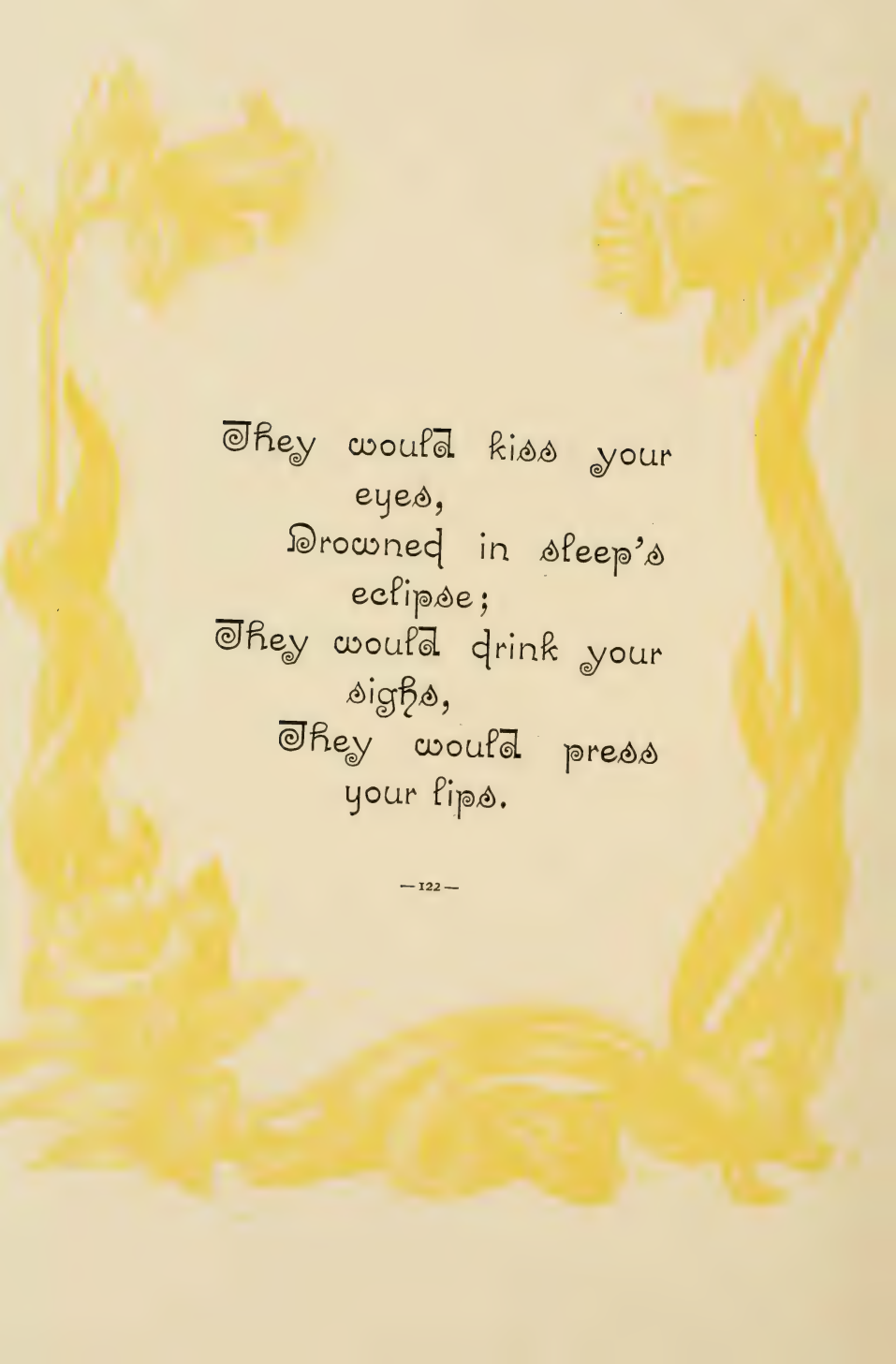
Of my songs had wings,  
They would fly to  
Thee,  
Pulsing, senseless things,  
Whispering of me.





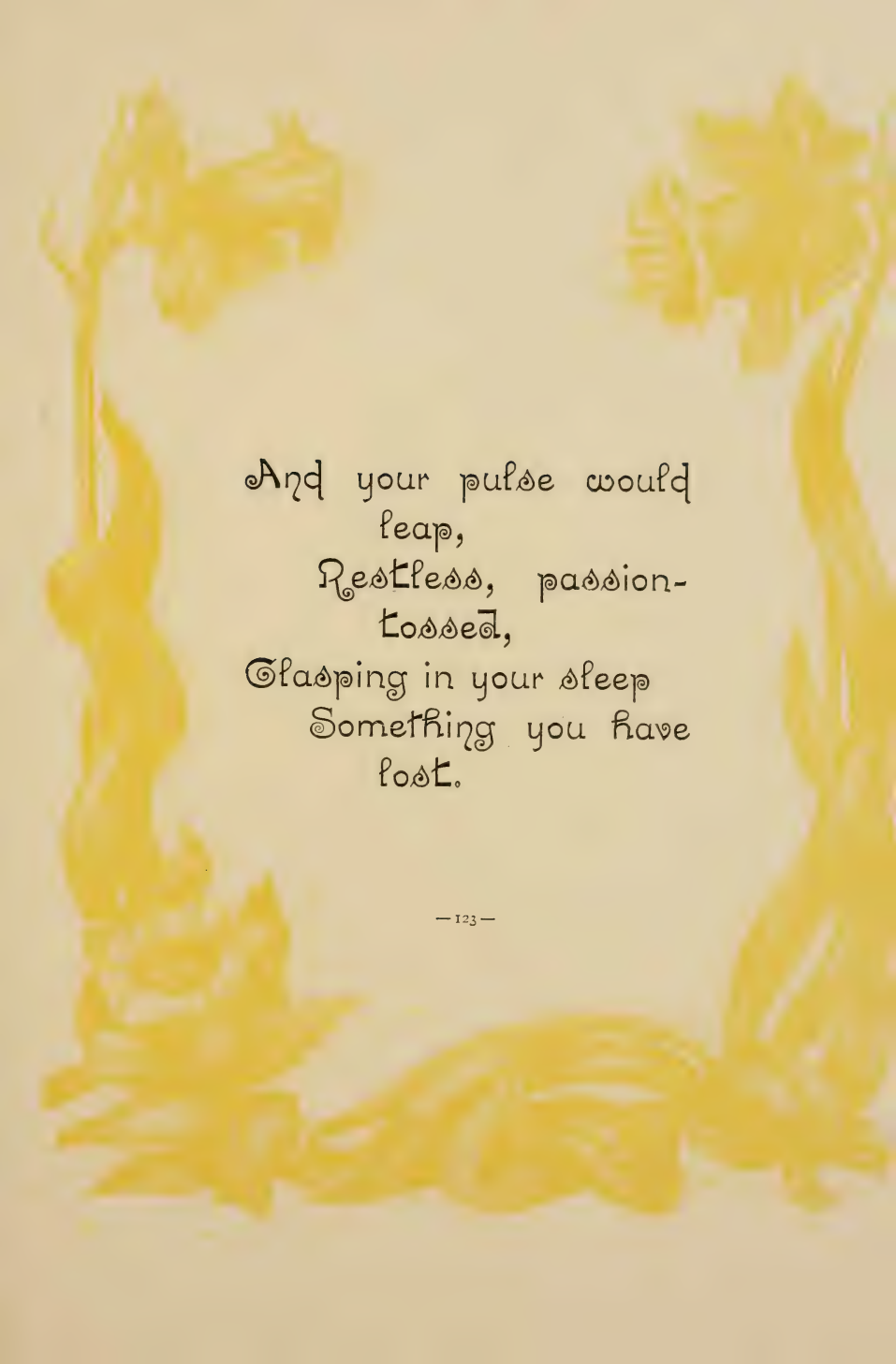


Frail as butterflies,  
Poised for airy flight,  
They would kiss your eyes  
On the middle night.

A decorative border of yellow flowers and leaves surrounds the text. The flowers are stylized and appear to be in bloom, with long, slender stems and large, pointed leaves. The overall effect is a soft, romantic frame for the central text.


They would kiss your  
eyes,  
Drowned in sleep's  
eclipse;  
They would drink your  
sighs,  
They would press  
your lips.




A decorative border of yellow flowers and leaves surrounds the text. The flowers are stylized and appear to be in various stages of bloom, with some showing distinct petals and others as buds or clusters. The leaves are long and pointed, with some showing veins. The overall style is soft and artistic, typical of early 20th-century book design.

And your pulse would  
leap,  
Restless, passion-  
tossed,  
Clasping in your sleep  
Something you have  
lost.



A faint, light green illustration of a flowering branch, possibly a rose, is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the page. The illustration shows several leaves and a cluster of buds or small flowers. The overall style is delicate and artistic, typical of early 20th-century book design.


Bud and Bloom




The night is a close-shut bud,  
That holdeth fast alway,  
The bloom of the morn to be,  
The folded flower of the day,  
The flower of the coming day.







My heart is a close-shut bud,  
That beareth, in every place,  
Always and alway, night and morn,  
The folded flower of your face;  
The dream of your dear face.



And the bud shall burst into  
bloom,  
In a summer-time divine,  
When my hands are laid in yours,  
And your lips are near to mine;  
Your dear lips close to mine.











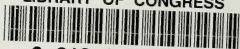




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